THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF CHINESE WOMEN

LUELLA MINER, Litt. D.

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LUELLA MINER, Litt. D.
President of the North China Union, Woman's College

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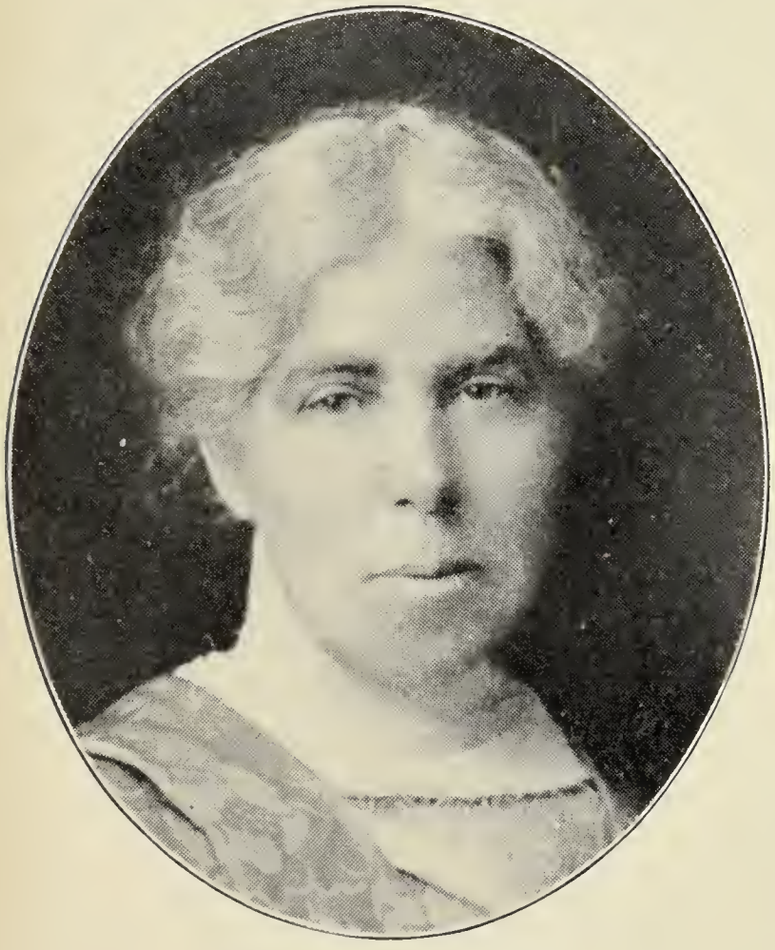
In the July number of the *International Review of Missions* Dr. Shailer Mathews writes: "It may yet appear that the largest service which the missionary motive is to render non-Christian lands will be found in the reorganization of the life of the women. To ignore this fact is either to force Asiatic women to preserve the present *status quo*, or to leave the direction of Asiatic feminism in the hands of those who are not in sympathy with intelligent Christian ideals for women."



MISS LUELLA MINER.

"The reorganization of the life of the women" of China, two hundred millions of them, this is the vastness of the work which awaits the little band whose daily task is "the Christian education of women," and it is only as we view the whole, on a little part of which the Christian leaven is working, that the daily task will be planned aright, and done in the right spirit.

"The reorganization of life," this goes into the fundamentals, and we must view our task intensively as well as extensively. There is no "*status quo*" to preserve in China today. The world forces which are working everywhere for individuality, freedom, and equal rights are shaking the age-firm foundations of Confucian ethics and rites, and unloosing the "three bonds" (San Kang) which have held society together. Recently the Ministry of the Interior has issued an order, the substance of which is given below:

"Formerly grave dignity and gentleness were the ideals for Chinese women, but late in the Ch'ing Dynasty the rights and freedom of women began to be advocated and some women have been so imbued with distorted ideas that they have lost all womanly grace. As a result at the time of the Revolution women took part in military expeditions and styled themselves Amazons. Then they contended by violent means for the right to participate in political affairs, and offended against the laws of the land and the humanitarian nature of womanhood by volunteering their services as bombthrowers and assassins, and overstepping all moral bounds. More recently the Ministry is distressed to find that these radical women are going from bad to worse, mixing with actresses and women of ill-repute. Feminine virtue is declining daily, and not only is society injured, but morality is dying. Therefore the Ministry of the Interior orders the police of Peking, and the governors and magistrates in every province, to take stern measures to repress such untoward conduct. It is necessary to train wise mothers and virtuous wives, in order that morals and customs may be reformed." The Ministry of Education in a recent order directing that selections from the classics be inserted in elementary readers and other textbooks and form the basis for ethical instruction, expresses sentiments like the following: "Any country which is pre-

served through ages has its national characteristics and customs, which are fostered by its environment and history. These national characteristics determine personal relations and give national ideals and models. Loyalty to these results in good moral character, which is the foundation of education. These characteristics do not offend against world characteristics and standards. The springs of morality are found in these national characteristics, and the extraordinary men produced by them are our national models. In the West the Bible is taught in schools, in Japan precepts of the emperors from the basis of ethics; one has its foundation in religious faith, the other in patriotic faith, and both derive their strength from the spirit of the people. By adopting Western or Japanese standards and motives and losing our true national temperament, we shall endanger the very existence of our land. For thousands of years Confucius has been our teacher and example, and in the education of our youth let faith silently grow and nurture character, and let the soul of the people be inspired by the perfect model. Then morality will be new every day, and fine will be the fruits of education."

At this crisis who can bring forth things old and new, the old ideals of Chinese womanhood, the new thoughts that thrill the hearts of these "radical women," and blend them into that most wonderful of creations, a poised, forceful, gentle, unselfish woman? This is part of our task, viewed intensively. We should be mediators between the old and the new, and the mediator must understand both, be sympathetic with the best in both. Will the souls of the women of China be satisfied with the message which the old Confucianism has to give them? By no means. Are the Ministries of Education and the Interior right in calling women back from their vagaries and holding before them the old ideals and standards? Assuredly.

And we shall fail in "the Christian education of women" as well as in our work as mediators if we forget that China has national characteristics, if we reject the old culture and customs, and Westernize instead of Christianize.

So ours is not the easy task of transplanting Western education and ideals and Christianity, of engaging young women to teach chemistry and Wagner, or of giving the twentieth century appeal to woman's sense of personality and freedom as it comes to the women in London, or of training Bible-women to proclaim what the message of Christ means to the women in New York. The world characteristics, the world temperament, these belong to our Chinese sisters, and they cannot again be shut away from the world movements. The best which the West has must be theirs, but made theirs by a blending with the old which does no violence to the best in the Chinese culture. The college girl in China should be a new type. The breeziness and unconventionality of a certain American type would be an anachronism here even in republican days. There should be more of dignity in bearing, more of reserve in friendship and in all that pertains to the emotions. And it is important that leaders in the education of women have well-defined ideals before them from start to finish. After all the best of the East and of the West are not so different in essentials. Tennyson writes:

> "Woman is not undeveloped man,
> But diverse . . . . . .
> Distinct in individualities,
> But like each other ev'n as those who love."

The "emancipated woman" of China who has broken over all the old conventions is both masculine and immoral. Those who know the "perfect law of liberty" should furnish the new type. Dr. Mathews calls feminism "the most critical movement of modern civil-

ization," which might mean "the dissolution of the family and the triumph of aesthetic animalism." Socialistic organizations which sprang up after the Revolution prove that this danger threatens China. "The missionary must face these movements with the spirit of Christ, and must surcharge the movement with the conservatism as well as the idealism of the Gospel."

The Christian education of women is carried on in the school, the church, and the home, and from these centers must go out those "new forces" which in "old China" are to reorganize the life of the women.

In these three centers we must have high ideals for our work. Our elementary schools are not numerous enough nor good enough. Day schools, at least in cities, should be practically self-supporting except for the plant and its upkeep. The recent popularity of mission schools makes this possible, for there are many who are willing and able to pay school fees. The safe conservatism and moral restraints of Christian schools appeal to non-Christian parents. And let us not raise the question whether the main purpose of such schools is educational or evangelistic. Use the best methods, make the teaching and discipline thorough. Faithful work and well-earned self-control are part of the evangel for China's children, and if the teacher is Spirit-inspired, with a true love for God and man, the church statistics-gatherer will not be disappointed. Even pupils who leave the school without outward connection with the church must, if the teacher is true to her mission, carry away something of the spirit of Christianity, and their sons and daughters may be leading Christians of the next generation. Our vision is too narrow and our faith too weak if we open these schools only to the children of Christians.

As to the grade of schools, they range from kindergarten to college. The possibilities of development of

SCHOOL GIRLS AT PLAY.

the kindergarten in China stagger the imagination, both as to extent and influence. Parents of wealth and distinction, some of whom might hesitate to send their older daughters to a mission school, welcome the Christian kindergarten with its message of love and care for the little ones. The associations of the kindergarten lead the child on into the day school. The influences of the kindergarten go into the homes of high and low, for a kindergarten entertainment always entertains, and the companies drawn to "mothers' meetings" and lectures by their attachment to children go home with ideas and aspirations which must be fruitful. In no other place can democracy strike its roots into more fertile soil, in no other place does the evolution of the "wild child" of the street and the spoiled child of the home, with their ungoverned passions, into the orderly little citizen, progress with more rapidity. There should be at least five first-class kindergarten training schools in different parts of China, girls should be sent to be trained even over great distances, and the missionary who "doesn't believe in kindergartens" should either be deported or made to study the subject as related to mission work in China, and the uplift of the nation.

For character in the making, setting into the hard lines which neither better influence later can easily alter nor strong temptations easily erase, the Middle School period is most important. This, too, is the decision time for many, and if the girl who has had her preliminary training in mission schools fails here to consecrate her life to Christ and to self-forgetful service, her teachers should question the cause of the failure. The middle school graduate will also proclaim by her manner whether she is to be one of the world's gentlewomen, or a pert, proud girl who will coarsen later into something still more repellent. In this grade the quality of our intellectual work must bear comparison

with that done in government schools, for more and more our graduates of this grade will teach in non-Christian schools.

There is need for more specialization and more practical training in middle schools for girls than in those for boys, because as yet fewer of them enter college, but not all of these kinds of work can be carried on in one institution. In addition to the regular course which prepares for college, and the general course which "prepares for life," there should be a lower normal course, a course for kindergarten assistants, one for nurses, and in some places industrial and household science courses. All of these should include that "preparation for life" which will give society the "wise mother and virtuous wife" for whom the Ministry of the Interior calls. If the home training of the girl has been normal, domestic science and needlework need make small inroads into the time given by boys to the regular course, but if there has been a lack here special provision should be made for this, perhaps in the summer vacation.

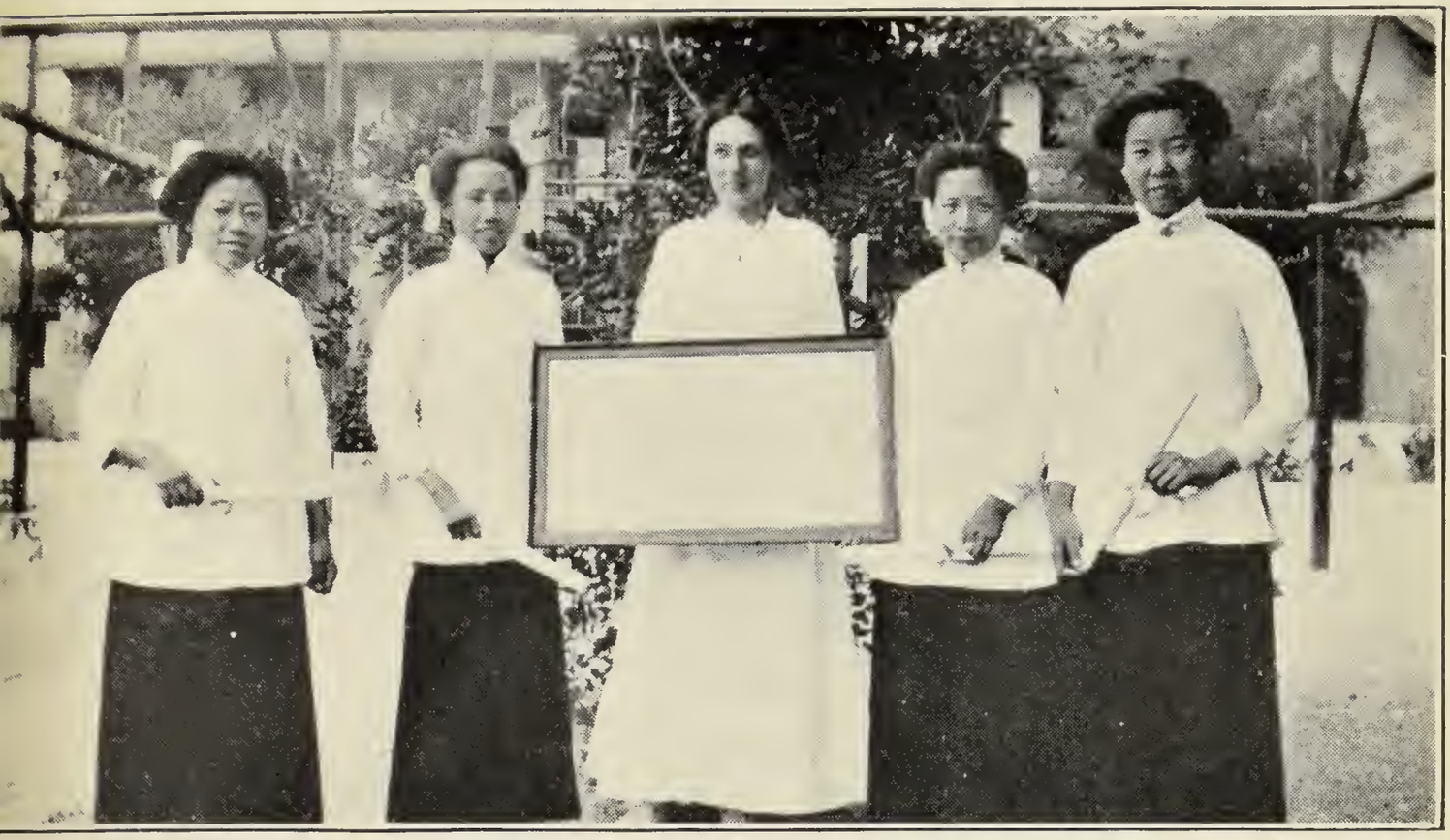
Rising above the middle school grade we should have vocational schools of all the varieties mentioned above (with the possible exception of the industrial), especially Normal and Kindergarten Training Schools. These courses should cover two or three years. There should also be a two years' Scientific Course to prepare for entering the Medical College, for though a college course is desirable as a preparation, it is seldom practicable under present conditions. Another need is a course of Literary Training, which will provide writers for our children's and women's papers, and for the local press on educational, aesthetic, hygienic and reform topics, who will give to China translations of Western fiction, or better yet, write the stories and songs of a new Christian China.

The time is now ripe for giving our young women

of middle school preparation who have an earnest desire to devote their lives to Christian work in some other line than ordinary teaching, an opportunity to take two or three years of Advanced Bible Training. One such school has already been opened in Nanking, and one is proposed in connection with the North China Union, Woman's College. Here the training should be as broad and thorough as in similar schools for men, and we shall find that some of our young women will not be satisfied even with this, but will demand the subjects taught in Theological Seminaries. Graduates of these schools will find a wide field for work as Bible teachers in Christian schools and station classes, as speakers in lecture halls for women, as leaders in organizing societies and in social service, above all, in giving the message of Christianity in a way which will appeal to the educated classes. The woman who does this work must have dignity, self-control, and a high sense of the sacredness of her calling. For certain times and places a chaperon should be provided, but with the changing customs, young women can safely enter doors closed to them before. The Scientific and Bible Training Courses can more easily be taught where a college course of four years would furnish in the regular classes a large proportion of the studies required, and a good range of electives. The work of Normal and Kindergarten Training is also greatly lightened and raised in quality where the students can attend regular college classes in Psychology, Ethics, Education, and kindred branches.

How many Union Colleges for women do we need, where should they be located, what should be their aim, scope, and equipment? We quote a few sentences from the "Findings of the General Conference" of 1913. "The vastness of the country and the deep interest of the Chinese people in education call for immediate and great enlargement of all our higher

educational work.....We recommend that at all these centers (mentioning large cities in North, South, East, West, and Central China) colleges be promptly developed and adequately maintained as university colleges, on a union basis if practicable.....Inasmuch as the Government is especially emphasizing education for women, we believe that in certain places where higher education is developed for men, similar work, not inferior in scope or quality, but not in all cases the same lines of specialization, should be developed for women. These institutions should not, however, be co-educational." At the recent meeting of the Advisory Council of the Educational Association the following action was taken: "While not recommending co-education in the same classes at the present time, we suggest the wisdom of organizing Women's Colleges under the same charter with the larger colleges and universities for men, and with such joint use of the teaching force, apparatus, etc., as the trustees from time to time may find advisable." At the June meeting of the Board of Managers of the North China Educational Union, at which recommendations were passed to speedily adopt measures which will render possible the long-desired Federation of all the North China Colleges under one charter, the Committee reported: "The North China Educational Union has heretofore, with great satisfaction, included the Union Woman's College and the Union Woman's Medical College. Therefore be it resolved that we desire that all our institutions should enter the proposed Federated University, the Women's Colleges and the Medical College, however, not being compelled to change their locations for the purpose of centralization unless they so desire." Dr. A. H. Smith writes: "It is doubtless correct to say that at present this Union Woman's College is the only institution of its kind of strictly college rank in all China. Not only so, but the



MISS JESSIE PAYNE AND THE CLASS OF 1914, NORTH CHINA UNION, WOMAN'S COLLEGE, PEKING.

trend of opinion in the China Continuation Committee is that there is no prospect of another Woman's College in all the vast region north of the Yangtse River. This of necessity implies that this sole and representative institution shall be afforded an adequate development, so that in time it may become to China what the Woman's College in Constantinople is to Turkey." This college has only graduated three small classes, but the intellectual and spiritual quality of these young women, the value of their work since graduation, and the demand for their services as teachers in government as well as Christian schools, as Y. W. C. A. secretaries, and as leaders in reform or social service organizations, proves the right of the college to exist. We rejoice that a similar union college may be opened in Nanking next year, the Ginling College for Women, and hope that South China will soon consider this important matter.

Woman's colleges will be small until we get more "feeders" for them, as few government or mission schools give adequate preliminary training, but the time is not far distant when their students should be numbered by hundreds, and when the quality of the work should equal that in the best colleges for women in the West. The Chinese girl can learn higher mathematics and psychology with no more confusion of brain than affects her Chinese brother or her foreign sister. Those who are to be leaders need the culture and discipline of such studies, as well as the so-called practical home-making sciences. This year marks a new era in woman's education, for the examinations of the American Indemnity College have been thrown open to them, and eleven young women are already on their way to the United States. The Young Women's Christian Association in Shanghai was asked to take charge of these examinations, and the touch with a Christian organization from the outset, the opportunity to keep the contact during their student life, and to continue it after their return to China, makes it almost possible to count this with the Christian educative forces. While it is well for a few selected students to go abroad for their education, this is more difficult for the young woman than for the young man, and it ought to be possible to get in her native land training so broad and so thorough that she will be as well equipped to work for the uplift of China as the student whose education has cost much more. Dr. Sidney Gulick has said: "A million dollar institution in Japan for higher education will count ten times as much as a million dollar institution in America for the uplifting of the world." Would not this be equally true of such an investment for the education of women in China?

The time has come when we must speak of educational work for women above the college grade. Our Medical Schools should be of such a grade, though for

a time the lack of pupils of more than middle school training to enter Women's Medical Colleges places them parallel with the college course. The North China Union Woman's Medical College gives five years of training, and has the highest standards of any in China. The Hackett Medical College for Women in Canton is a close second, and has graduated more pupils. The physicians who go out from these schools answer one of China's most pathetic calls, and other women, not fully trained, are working in women's hospitals and relieving distress in homes. Western capital, seeking to coin itself into love and more abundant life, can find no better opportunity than to equip and endow two or three really first-class Medical Colleges for women in China. All of these institutions for higher education should have sufficient endowment to pay all the salaries of the faculties as well as the running expenses, for the uncertain income of mission boards cannot be depended upon to maintain first-class institutions.

The medical is not the only education above college grade which China's women are demanding. Few have reached the height from which they can voice their demand, but already the question is asked "Where can I specialize in psychology, or education, or mathematics, or science, or English?" The general course now given in college, with its few electives, cannot long form the apex of our educational structure.

From kindergarten through college we have about seventeen years of preparation for life. And every school, of whatever grade, should be a social service and religious center; a training school for Christian, educative, and philanthropic effort. We have already mentioned the influences which should radiate from the kindergarten. The primary and every higher grade should also link up with the life of the community. Dr. Gamewell says of the Philippines that the elemen-

tary school is the agent through which national movements are advanced, such as campaigns in hygiene or for improving the food supply. No teacher, Chinese or foreign, should consider her duty discharged simply in the daily routine of the school. Temperance work and reform movements can be promoted by public lectures given in the school or at some other place in the neighborhood. Methods of organization should become familiar by practice as well as theory. Christian pupils should do systematic religious work, especially for little children in the community. Prepare for life by living, learn to do by doing.

Thus far we have described the education and influence which center in the school, and that centering in church and home must be given less in detail, though it is no less important. Every year thousands of women who cannot read, or who know very little of Christian truth, come into our field of work, and their instruction, not only in reading but in all that makes for Christian living, lays a heavy burden upon the church. For these the routine gatherings for instruction and worship, the church service, the Sunday School, the Christian Endeavor and prayer-meeting are not sufficient. Even women who have been church members for many years need an occasional "station class" to quicken their intellectual and spiritual life and to fit them better for voluntary work for others. Should not this work be made more practical in many places by introducing more normal methods, and by taking the women out individually for "practice work" and by making them feel that each new gain to mind and spirit is a gift in trust to be used for others? As to inquirers who have a fixed purpose to become followers of Christ, and interested women who have not yet so decided, their instruction either in day classes or in centers to which they come as boarders, is one of our most fruitful kinds of work. Now that we are

coming more into contact with the educated classes of China, could not more classes be held, meeting perhaps two or three times a week, in which arithmetic, science, sanitation, and similar branches might be taught, as well as the Bible, thus bringing into the circle of Christian influence many who might not come simply to learn the doctrine? New times, with their new opportunities, demand new methods.

For all this instruction within the radius of church influence, and for the evangelistic work which spreads in ever-widening circles, we need to *train* an army of *Bible-women*. We must find the material in the local classes, and where more than one mission occupies a center, there should be co-operation in the training. In addition Union Bible Schools for Women should be established in every province, or in every important center. Here the studies cannot be so advanced as in the schools for women of middle school training already mentioned, still our standards should advance, for the demands now made upon a Bible-woman are very different from those of former years. Even where missionaries are so pressed with the daily routine of work that it seems impossible to undertake the work of training women, it should be done. Today's urgent task must not hide from our eyes the greater work which Chinese women can do a few years hence if they have adequate preparation.

The Home as a Christianizing, educating influence is one of our most potent factors in reconstructing the life of this great nation. The measure of our success in work may be taken from the quality of home life in any Christian community. If we fail here, vain is our boast as to the numbers in our schools or on our church records. And it is the mothers, wives, and daughters who make the home atmosphere. Many Christian men, educated at great expense and giving promise of usefulness, fail because they are hindered

THE PEKING BIBLE SCHOOL

where they should be helped. Take the economic question. Church salaries are small, but if the wife is wise in expenditures and shares her husband's spirit of self-sacrifice, all will be well. She makes her home hygienic, orderly, attractive, and cheerful. The pastor or teacher can invite his friends there to a well-served, simple meal instead of taking them to an expensive restaurant. There, too, he gets rest or stimulus as they are needed for body, mind and spirit, and goes out strong for the work of life. As to child-training, it is the most important phase of Christian education, and it centers in the home. What do the influences of a few hours a day for a few months of the year spent in the school-room count against all the hours spent by the child in the home? Christian mothers need to learn more of mother-craft, of child psychology, of ways of controlling the violent tempers and loud voices, of cultivating the gentle manners which children from Christian homes so often sadly lack. Above all, they need to sit at the feet of the Master and learn to love and value the child. "Wise mothers and virtuous wives," should not their light shine out from every Christian home, and should not the influence of such homes spread even further than that of our schools? Our schools are to prepare men and women for living; we fail if the home is not telling on the community life. The woman in the home in China is far freer than the Western woman in her home land to devote time to social service and philanthropic and religious work, because good servants are obtainable for the drudgery of the home. Missionaries must train them for this and for a time share the work with them. Much latent talent awaits wise, sympathetic leadership, and after a little experience, the Western associate can drop into the background. The craze of "Young China," women as well as men, for extravagant display and dissipation, the curse of wine and cigarettes,

the bane of concubinage, the blight of the social evil, will not yield to direct attack, but they vanish when the ideal home comes. Even in the minor matter of aesthetics our homes should be models. The Chinese woman who ten years ago was dressing her little girl tastefully in native styles, now rigs her out in colors and fashions called foreign, which are an eyesore, and the reception room, once artistic and harmonious with hardwood furniture, scrolls and paintings, now smites the sight with upholstered furniture in divers colors, impossible crocheted doilies, and coarse pictures. Our girls may have studied hygiene in the school, but they must learn to use their knowledge in their own homes in effecting good ventilation, in preventing the spread of contagion, in fighting flies, and must think for themselves how to apply the principles of chemistry, physiology, and biology to plain, every-day living. It is far easier to teach the girl in the schoolroom or the woman in the station-class than it is to follow them into their homes and reprove those who "know to do good and do it not." But much good teaching pertaining to things physical, intellectual, and spiritual is lost because we are too busy or too sensitive to do this "follow up" work.

The school, the church, and the home as centers from which influences go out to every city and hamlet in China, "to reorganize life," nothing less than this is our aim in "the Christian education of women." And He who has uplifted womanhood wherever His Gospel has gone is the Spring of all these influences.

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